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## House of Representatives

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# NEWS RELEASE

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May 15, 1964

Congressman William L. Dawson, Chairman of the House Government Operations Committee, today released a study on the use of nonattributed news stories from Government sources. The study was supervised by Congressman Henry S. Reuss of Wisconsin.

"Government news from anonymous sources -- the leak, the trial balloon, the unidentified spokesman -- is an extensively used journalistic device," Congressman Reuss said, "yet leaders of the news profession concede there is no code of ethics covering the use of anonymous sources, and they hold out little hope for the development of such a code. They rely, instead, upon mutual trust between the reporter and his news source".

Congressman Reuss said attention was focused on anonymous-type news stories during recent hearings on government information policies held by the Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee under the Chairmanship of Congressman John E. Moss.

"The great volume of government news now coming from anonymous spokesmen raises serious questions about the people's right to be fully and honestly informed about their government," Congressman Reuss said. "The public has no way to question the accuracy and truthfulness of government spokesmen who are cloaked in anonymity. The

-2-

anonymous news source may be useful in making more information available to the public, but it can be a self-serving device to convey distorted information which the public seldom can evaluate."

Representatives of various branches of journalism were asked for their views on the validity of nonattributed-type news stories. They also were asked whether there is or should be a code of ethics governing the publishing of such stories. The news officials queried generally believe that a precise canon of ethics would be desirable but state that such rules cannot be developed and that there is little possibility of handling nonattributed news stories other than the methods now in use.

News officials who commented are:

Herbert Brucker, Past President, American Society of Newspaper Editors; Irwin Maier, Past President, American Newspapers Publishers Association; Roger Tatarian, Executive Editor, United Press International; Leroy Collins, President, National Association of Broadcasters; Theodore F. Koop, President, Sigma Delta Chi; Dr. Earl English, Dean, School of Journalism, University of Missouri; Julius Frandsen, Washington Manager, United Press International.

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